

The Persecution and Selection Out of Murray Smith III as Performed by the Personnel System of the Foreign Service

By Tom Dowling

THE MEMORIES STILL come back with regularity, those hot flashes in the soul that speak of seven years of my youth spent in the Foreign Service.

I arrived in Washington to be sworn in on a balmy fall day in 1961, full of hope, goodwill, even a large streak of self-importance. It was my first job and I came in a pair of black pointed shoes, a brown glen-plaid suit, and a somewhat daring block-print tie—all selected by a salesman at Lafayette, Indiana's leading men's store, with a view to quietly suggesting my new image as a diplomatic personage.

Up on the eleventh floor of the USIA building, I met my classmates for the first time. One said he had discovered that Foreign Service Officers of our grade merited the same military courtesy afforded lieutenants (jg) in the Navy. I forget now how many guns were to be assembled for the salute should our duties entail an official call on a naval vessel. At the time the impending honor from the fleet seemed a flattering, possibly even appropriate prospect. Clearly, the Foreign Service was no ordinary enterprise and such tributes could be gladly borne.

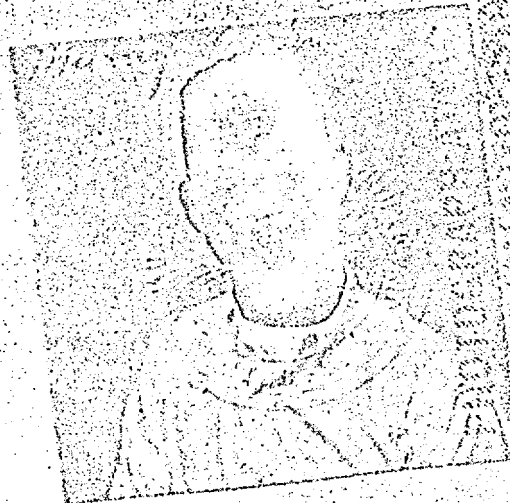
In due course, Edward R. Murrow walked toward the front of the room, drawing at his cigarette as if facing some ghastly ordeal. He delivered the usual valedictorian thoughts about the challenge ahead, all couched in the cadenced bombast of a high Kennedy Administration official. Such efforts were, of course, small beer for Murrow, who could hardly be expected to compose a fresh set of clichés for the occasion. We were, he said, a diverse group—men, women, blacks, whites, from different regions and backgrounds. More than that, he went on, struggling to break out of a line of thought that even he seemed to find oppressive, our education and work experiences were so rich with variety. Here he seemed to sigh, as if sensing that fresh material, a personal note was at hand. We harbored in our number, he said, a Ph.D. candidate, a film director, newspapermen, even a boilermaker. He produced the word as if it were a deeply held puff of smoke. It later turned out that the boilermaker was a Dartmouth graduate who had worked one summer as an apprentice in a boiler-maker factory.

At the time I honored Murrow for his stand against Senator Joseph McCarthy and

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NAME MURRAY CLIFFORD SMITH 3RD		
BIRTH DATE MARCH 12, 1939	BIRTHPLACE ALASKA, U.S.A.	
HEIGHT 6	HAIR BROWN	EYES HAZEL
WEIGHT 160	MINOR	
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